

**Water Supply Reserve Account – Grant and Loan Program  
Water Activity Summary Sheet  
Agenda Item 5.e**

**Applicant:** The Greenway Foundation

**Water Activity Name:** South Platte River Recreation and Habitat Improvement Preliminary Design

**Water Activity Purpose:** Nonstructural Water Project

**County:** Denver

**Drainage Basin:** South Platte

**Water Source:** South Platte

**Amount Requested:** \$250,000 (\$25,000 Metro Basin Account, \$25,000 South Platte Basin Account, \$200,000 Statewide Account)

**Matching Funds:** Requested basin funds will be used to match the requested statewide WSRA funds. Funding for final design and construction is being pursued.

<b>Staff Recommendation</b>
Staff recommends approval of up to \$25,000 from the Metro Basin Account, \$25,000 from the South Platte Basin Account, and \$200,000 from the Statewide Account to help complete the South Platte River Recreation and Habitat Improvement Preliminary Design.

**Water Activity Summary:**

In 2008, the Greenway Foundation (TGF) and the City and County of Denver (Denver) initiated a planning and implementation effort to establish a vision for a healthy and prosperous South Platte River through Denver. The River North Greenway Master Plan (RINO) was a \$100,000 planning effort (including cash and in-kind contributions), completed in March 2009, focusing on recreation and habitat improvements within the three mile reach of the South Platte River between 20<sup>th</sup> St. and the Denver/Adams County Boundary. Immediately thereafter, the River South Greenway Master Plan (RISO) was initiated. This \$450,000 jointly-funded effort (Colorado Water Conservation Board, Urban Drainage and Flood Control District, City and County of Denver, Denver Water, and The Greenway Foundation) focused on the seven miles of South Platte River habitat and recreation improvements upstream of RINO between 20<sup>th</sup> St., upstream to the Denver/Arapahoe County Boundary. In 2010, TGF, again in partnership with Denver, developed the South Platte River Vision Implementation Plan (RVIP) - a \$125,000 planning effort to prioritize all of the recommendations within RINO and RISO in to a series of short, mid and long term recommendations as well as developing cost opinions for the five short term RVIP priorities.

This project will progress the development of the prioritized recreation and habitat improvements identified over the last three years. Specifically, WSRA funding will be used to establish design criteria, prepare preliminary design drawings and specifications and identify required permits for river improvements in the following reaches described in the South Platte RVIP: Grant Frontier Park and Overland Regional Park reach, and the Vanderbilt and Johnson-Habitat Park reach. Improvements target non-consumptive needs including boating, tubing, fishing and wildlife enhancements in this urban environment.

This Preliminary Design proposal is the next step in a sequence of events that will lead to the realization of these non-consumptive use benefits. Improvements in these two reaches include multi-use river access facilities, channel bank modifications to provide additional habitat, and modification of existing drop structures to provide state-of-the-art boating and fishing experiences through the length of the park. Implementation of this project will greatly improve the limited river access, improve the river's wildlife habitat and provide a water quality

benefit in these reaches. The project includes design development of pool and riffle habitat and recreation opportunities, bank stabilization and additional riparian habitat. By decreasing the side slopes along the river, new wetland and riparian habitats will be created with self sustaining native vegetation. In addition to providing recreation and habitat benefits, these areas will be designed to help treat urban stormwater runoff from adjacent neighborhoods that previously discharged directly into the South Platte River.

#### *Funding Overview*

TGF has already initiated efforts to obtain numerous additional sources of funding for final design and construction of these proposed improvements. In addition to the \$675,000 funded to date to establish this vision and identify potential projects, other possible funding sources are being aggressively pursued including: Shattuck Natural Resource Damage funds, City and County of Denver, Urban Drainage and Flood Control District, Great Outdoors Colorado, EPA, DOT, USACE, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service programs, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation programs, Colorado Division of Wildlife programs, and Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment programs. In addition, a number of local, regional and national private funding sources are being approached to partner in this transformation effort. TGF's excellent track record of delivering improvements to the South Platte River and tributaries over the last 37 years will add to the likelihood of obtaining these various design and construction funds. TGF and Denver are committed to obtaining between \$5-\$10 Million of public and private funds for the recommendations within the RVIP over the next 2-3 years.

#### *Threshold and Evaluation Criteria*

The application meets all four Threshold Criteria.

The application articulates how the project meets the Evaluation Criteria as summarized below:

#### Tier 1: Promoting Collaboration/Cooperation & Meeting Water Management Goals & Identified Needs:

The proposed project is an IPP in the Metro Basin Needs Assessment Report (March 2011). This project addresses non-consumptive needs in the South Platte River and will promote collaboration between the Metro and South Platte Basin Roundtables as well as the State of Colorado. Collaboration between the BRT's will be a direct result of each Basin's participation in the kickoff meeting and project workshop described in the attached Scope of Work. The kickoff meeting will include a site visit and discussion of proposed improvements, as well as discussion of potential issues and challenges. Following the kickoff meeting, a draft preliminary design report and preliminary design will be developed and presented to the BRT's at a subsequent design review meeting. The proposed improvements will integrate recreation and habitat enhancements that will benefit the Front Range community and one of the most densely-populated areas in the State of Colorado. This water activity is the next critical step in implementing non-consumptive improvements in the South Platte River through Denver.

Tier 2: Facilitating Water Activity Implementation: WSRA funds are necessary for successful completion of the project and further leveraging of local and federal monies. A significant investment has been expended to date to develop this South Platte River Vision, as portrayed in the RINO, RISO and RVIP plans. TGF and Denver are committed to obtaining between \$5-\$10 Million of public and private funds for the recommendations within RVIP over the next 2-3 years. Funding is critically needed, however, to initiate the design and progress the development beyond the conceptual level. Community support for this effort is strong. The former Mayor of Denver, now Governor Hickenlooper, officially endorsed this three-plus year planning and visioning effort. In addition, Denver City Council issued a proclamation in November 2010 applauding the RINO, RISO and RVIP documents. TGF has an excellent track record of delivering improvements to the South Platte River and tributaries for over 37 years.

Tier 3: The Water Activity Addresses Issues of Statewide Value and Maximizes Benefits: This project has gained support from two basin roundtables as addressing issues of common concern. In addition, the proposed project is an IPP in the Metro Basin Needs Assessment Report (March 2011) and will help meet environmental and recreational needs in one of the most densely-populated areas in Colorado. CWCB

participated in the development of the RISO plan and the preliminary design of these proposed improvements is necessary for the continued implementation of the vision defined during the previous planning effort.

**Discussion:**

This water activity addresses non-consumptive needs and interests of multiple basins by furthering design of recreation and habitat improvement concepts presented in the community-based, multi-stakeholder vision documents - the RISO Master Plan and South Platte RVIP. The proposed project will help sustain environmental and recreational needs of statewide significance. The project is also identified in the Metro Basin Needs Assessment Report (March 2011) as addressing non-consumptive needs, specifically targeting habitat restoration and recreation improvements.

**Issues/Additional Needs:**

No issues or additional needs remain.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Staff recommends approval of up to \$25,000 from the Metro Basin Account, \$25,000 from the South Platte Basin Account, and \$200,000 from the Statewide Account to help complete the South Platte River Recreation and Habitat Improvement Preliminary Design.

All products, data and information developed as a result of this grant must be provided to the CWCB in hard copy and electronic format as part of the project documentation. This information will in turn be made widely available to Basin Roundtables and the general public and will help promote the development of a common technical platform. In accordance with the revised WSRA Criteria and Guidelines, staff would like to highlight additional reporting and final deliverable requirements. The specific requirements are provided below.

**Reporting:** The applicant shall provide the CWCB a progress report every 6 months, beginning from the date of the executed contract. The progress report shall describe the completion or partial completion of the tasks identified in the scope of work including a description of any major issues that have occurred and any corrective action taken to address these issues.

**Final Deliverable:** At completion of the project, the applicant shall provide the CWCB a final report that summarizes the project and documents how the project was completed. This report may contain photographs, summaries of meetings and engineering reports/designs.

**Engineering:** All engineering work (as defined in the Engineers Practice Act (§12-25-102(10) C.R.S.)) performed under this grant shall be performed by or under the responsible charge of professional engineer licensed by the State of Colorado to practice Engineering.